

Testimony      Sister Yukiko Yamaguchi

I attended a worship service at this church for the first time on August 13 of this year with my second son and granddaughter. Since then, I have attended the service almost every week.

Four months have passed since then and I thank God and Jesus for baptizing me on this very meaningful and important day called Christmas.

I accepted Jesus because of my second son. My second son had been working in Hiroshima City for 10 years, but he retired and came back home. He must have had a lot on his mind. One day, he said he wanted to travel Japan by bicycle from north to south. His father took the second son to a shrine, had the bicycle purified, and off he went in high spirits.

I spent about five years traveling from the northern tip of Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the south, working part-time here and there along the way. Then I found a job in Okinawa and moved there. There I met an Okinawan and got married 3 years ago, but my parents could not go because of the Corona disaster.

My family in Okinawa was a Christian family and my mother was a pastor. My second son got married and got a job as a caregiver and had a baby, which was a relief for me. I had no idea what it was like to be a Christian, but my second son reported to me that he had been baptized, and I told him, "Well, that's great.

The next year in April, three members of my family returned home and told me about the gospel of Jesus.

At that time, I didn't think the gospel was a fact, a story in a foreign myth. He gave me a Bible, but I didn't understand the translation of such a heavy book of foreign stories, so I told him I would read it little by little.

Until then, I had made up my mind to live my life freely on my own. This is because when I was working in Hiroshima City in my early twenties, someone at work invited me to join the Soka Gakkai and I had been a believer for 30 years. The new religious group is called Nichiren Shoshu, which is a branch of the Lotus Sutra within Buddhism, and is the supporting body of the New Komeito Party, which aims to change destiny through self-reliance and human revolution to achieve world peace.

It taught the exact opposite of Jesus Christ, saying that Christianity was an exoteric religion and that one should not believe in spirits.

I got into trouble with other believers in that society, and I thought this religious belief was strange, so I left the church 15 years ago. Since then, I worshipped the Jodo Shinshu idols and ancestors on the ancestral altar in my house, and I worshipped and protected the altar.

I am the eldest of three sisters and moved in with my grandmother and parents when I got married. I was blessed with two boys and a girl, and when the youngest entered daycare, I started working part time at a company where I worked for 23 years until I retired. After retiring, I had to take care of my father and mother. My father was in an institution for dementia and wanted to go home when I went to visit him, but my mother would never let him do so. My mother herself suffered from osteoporosis, which caused back pain and required nursing care, and I went to many doctors to make her as comfortable as possible. He became controlling and dependent on me.

He was so self-centered, cold-hearted, and glib that I was so overcome that I had a mental breakdown and could not sleep for three days.

I consulted my family doctor and was given stabilizers and sleeping pills, but I could not stand the attacks from my mother.

Since my daughter's delivery was just around the corner, I went to her place to stay for about 5 months, and then I left for my apartment alone.

When I told this to my sisters, they said, "Don't you ever come home, why don't you leave home with your brother! Why are you leaving home with your brother?"

My mother made herself the victim by saying bad things about me that had no basis in fact, and this destroyed the close relationship between my sisters, who had been close. After moving away from my mother and moving out to an apartment, I finally felt better, came back to myself, and began to wonder why I had to live alone in this place, which was ridiculous.

In August, my children would be back for Obon, I began to worry about the house, the garden and the farm, and most of all, I felt bad for worrying and bothering my family, so I went home at the beginning of August, but my mother attacked me with her mouth as usual, and I told her several times that her mouth was bad.

During the 8 months I was gone, my mother was able to do almost everything on her own and I ignored her without any involvement.

When I researched in books and on my phone to find out why my mother was such a person, I found psychopath (psychopath), and her original personality and even worse behavior at that time resembled the characteristics of a psychopath. But we, as non-professionals, couldn't do anything about it, and for five years I kept telling my mother that she had a bad mouth and defended myself.

My mother was totally unfazed and lived at her own pace, but it caused a lot of stress to the family. My sons said they would leave this house anytime, my husband began to complain that they should never have come to this house, and the parent-child, husband and wife, and sisters were fractured and on the verge of collapse.

My anger and hatred toward my mother only increased.

It was during this time that my second son told me to send him an important message on February 20 of this year, and he sent it to me on line.

The next day when I was alone, I read Romans 10:9-11, "That is, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the mouth one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For all the Scriptures say that no one who believes in him will end in disappointment." I read the following.

Then he added, "Jesus, I accept You as Lord. I believe in Jesus Christ. Please come into me. I give you my all. Help me. Forgive me for my sins.

Suddenly, I burst into tears and did not know what happened. It was truly a strange experience. After that, I felt refreshed and the black fog in my heart and head seemed to clear away. When I reported this to my second son, I learned that this was what it means to be saved. My sins were forgiven.

Since then, as I started reading the Bible and praying every day, my long-standing anger, hatred, and inability to forgive others gradually faded away, and I began to enjoy my days more and more.

After my change, my family and my sisters who had been away for a long time suddenly came to visit me, talked with me as if nothing had happened, and left. That is also strange. Now the bonds of family and kinship are returning again as before.

When I told my family about the baptism, they said it was fine. I want to save this precious family that God gave me.

I am convinced that this invisible and only living God, Jesus, is a real Savior, more wonderful than idols made by human beings.

I was filled with tears and joy to know that even though I have aged so much and sinned so much, if I repent of my sins, I will still be forgiven, and the more sinful I am, the more He will love me more.

I always keep in mind His words, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. Hebrews 13:5.

Once again, I thank God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit for baptizing me today. I also thank those who prepared and prayed for my baptism. I also thank God for my family in Okinawa and my second son and his wife who led me to God and Jesus.

2:8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

2:9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

2:10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

2:11 "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

2:12 "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

2:15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

2:16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

2:17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

2:18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

2:20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

[From today's sermon.

Happy Christmas!

Congratulations, blessed woman, the Lord is with you." "Fear not, Mary, for you have received grace from God.

There is nothing that God cannot do.

I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word.

How blessed is the woman who believes that what the Lord has spoken will be fulfilled!

How blessed is the woman who believed that what the Lord had said would come to pass! For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is great, and His mercy endures forever to those who fear Him.

And God said, "Behold, I have done great things unto thee, and thou hast done great things unto me. nbspGod hath looked upon his people, and has redeemed them: he hath set up for us a horn of salvation in the house of David our servant.

. to deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and out of the hand of all that hate us.

For he hath delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and maketh us to serve him with righteousness and without fear as long as we live ... according to the merciful will of our God.

And by his mercy the light of day shines upon us from above,

And by his mercy the light of day shines on us from above, shining on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and leads our feet in the way of peace.

Fear not, for the light of day is with us from above. Behold, I tell you of the great joy that will be given to all peoples."

The Christmas message has all been fulfilled. The Word is realized in our lives as well.

Happy Christmas, everyone!

Congratulations, blessed woman, the Lord is with you." "Fear not, Mary, for you have received grace from God."

There is nothing that God cannot do.

I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word.

How blessed is the woman who believes that what the Lord has spoken will be fulfilled!

How blessed is the woman who believed that what the Lord had said would come to pass! For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is great, and His mercy endures forever to those who fear Him.

And God said, "Behold, I have done great things unto thee, and thou hast done great things unto me. nbspGod hath looked upon his people, and has redeemed them: he hath set up for us a horn of salvation in the house of David our servant.

. to deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and out of the hand of all that hate us.

For he hath delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and maketh us to serve him with righteousness and without fear as long as we live ... according to the merciful will of our God.

And by his mercy the light of day shines upon us from above,

And by his mercy the light of day shines on us from above, shining on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and leads our feet in the way of peace.

Fear not, for the light of day is with us from above. Behold, I tell you of the great joy that will be given to all peoples."

Thank you for these messages from God at Christmas.

We are easily afraid. We are shaken, anxious, at our wits' end, hunched over, anxious, frustrated, exhausted.

How could I possibly know that? I am an old man, and my wife is old," they reason and worry about this, that, and the other.

Luke 14:16 Then Jesus said, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many people.

14:17 When the time came for the supper, he sent me to those whom he had invited, saying, 'Come, come! We are ready for you.

14:18 But they all began to refuse. The first one said, 'I have bought the land, so I must go and see. Please forgive me.

14:19 The other said, "I have bought five pairs of oxen, and I am going to check them. Please forgive me,

14:20 The other said, "I have given birth to a wife, so I cannot come.

But the LORD is mighty, the LORD is powerful, and nothing is impossible with Him. He who waits for the Lord will also be able to climb up the slope of life's hardships with wings of eagle's wings.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known, have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the fruits of the earth; he shall not be weak nor weary, his wisdom is immeasurable.

40:29 He giveth strength to the weak, and to the feeble he giveth increase of strength.

40:30 The young man is weak and weary, and the mature man is weary and falls.

40:31 But those who wait for the LORD will have new strength; they will mount up with wings like me. 40:32 But those who wait for the Lord will have new strength, and they will mount up with wings spread as I am.

How can this be? I do not yet have a husband.

It is inconceivable that a child could be born without a husband, let alone without a relationship with a man other than her husband. It would be an absurdity. The fact that both the husband and wife are old may be a big obstacle, but the fact that a child is born without a partner is an even bigger obstacle. It is hard to understand that God can do the unthinkable, the impossible, and the unattainable, but when we consider that God does not have to give up on things that we might otherwise give up on, we can see how reassuring He is.

The message of Christmas is that nothing is impossible with God. God has good plans for us. There is no need to fear. No need to sink into our own thoughts. Trust and surrender to God's good plan. I think the message is to learn to believe and to surrender.

8 Now there were shepherds in the region, keeping watch over their flocks by night in the open fields.

In verse 4, we read, "Joseph also, being of David's lineage and descent, left Nazareth, a city of Galilee, and went up to Bethlehem, a city of David in Judaea." The spotlight is on the shepherds in that very region. Shepherds. Later Jesus would say, "I am the good shepherd," but the world's view of shepherds was cold. They were the ones who were protecting the lives of the sheep in the field, but they could not wash their hands at meals or keep the Sabbath, as the Pharisees told the Lord's disciples.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

10:12 When the hireling, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. And the wolf takes the sheep and scatters them again.

10:13 For he is a hireling, and has no regard for the sheep.

10:14 For I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and my sheep also know me.

10:15 Just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

Matt.

15:1 Then came the Pharisees and the scribes to Jesus from Jerusalem, and said, "What is this that you are doing?"

15:2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the people of old? They do not wash their hands at meals.

15:3 Jesus answered and said, "Why do you also, by your own traditions, break God's present commandment?"

15:4 God said, "Honor your father and your mother," and, "He who disrespects his father or mother is surely condemned to death.

15:5 And yet you say, "If any man shall say to his father or mother, This thing which I am to

give thee is an offering; and they shall say, This thing is not an offering; and they shall say, This thing is not an offering; and they shall say, This thing is not an offering,

15:6 And you say, 'If anyone says to his father or mother, "This thing that is to be given to you is an offering," you need not honor your father or mother. Thus by your own traditions you are annulling the word of God.

15:7 Isaiah, you hypocrites, makes this appropriate prophecy about you,

15:8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

15:9 They teach the falsehood of men, and worship me in vain.

15:10 Then Jesus called the multitude to him and said, "Hear and understand.

15:11 What goes into the mouth does not defile anyone. 15:11 What goes into the mouth defiles no man, but what comes out of the mouth defiles him.

15:11 What goes into the mouth does not defile a man, but what comes out of the mouth defiles him. Instead, it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.

We cannot be righteous in our own strength by fully obeying God's decrees. We are

John 8:10 Then Jesus arose and said to the woman, "Woman, where is everyone? Has no one punished you?"

8:11 The woman said, "Lord, no one. Jesus said, "Neither will I punish you. Go home. And sin no more from now on.

8:12 Jesus also spoke to the people, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever comes after me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Luke 7:45 And thou hast not kissed me, but she hath kissed my feet from the time that I came into the house.

7:46 Thou hast not anointed my head with oil, but she hath anointed my feet with perfume.

7:47 So I say to you, because she has loved much, her many sins are forgiven. He who has forgiven only a little loves only a little."

7:48 And He said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven.

7:49 Then those present began to say in their hearts, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"

7:50 But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

Psalm 51:16 You do not like sacrifices. Even if I were to offer a burnt offering, You would not



be pleased.

51:17 The sacrifice that God accepts is a broken soul. O God, thou wilt not redeem a broken and contrite heart.

James 2:12 Therefore speak and do as one who ought to be judged by the law of liberty.

2:13 And whosoever shall not have mercy, judgment shall come upon him without a parable. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Luke 14:12 And Jesus said to those who invited him, "When you sit down to lunch or supper, do not invite your friends, brothers, relatives, or rich neighbors. For they will probably invite you back, and you will receive a return favor.

14:13 Rather, when you give a feast, invite the poor, the handicapped, the lame, and the blind.

14:14 Then you will be blessed, because they will not be able to return the favor. You will be rewarded at the resurrection of the righteous.

Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors, sinners, etc.?"

9:12 When Jesus heard this, He said, "The strong do not need a physician. But the sick need a physician.

9:13 Go and learn what it means, "I love mercy, not sacrifice. I have not come to invite the righteous, but sinners.

9:35 Jesus went about in every town and village, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness.

9:36 And when he saw the multitude as sheep without a shepherd, weak and fallen, he had compassion on them.

9:37 And He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

9:38 Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest.

We are weak, needy, and diseased, incapable of self-help or self-rehabilitation. We cannot repay God in any way. But God delights in the sacrifice of broken hearts, as it is said, "I prefer mercy, not sacrifice. This is why the shepherds were chosen.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to them that perish, but to us who

are saved it is the power of God.

1:19 For it is written in the Scriptures, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will make the wisdom of the wise vain.

1:20 Where is the wise man? Where are the scholars? Where are the world's controversialists? Has not God made the wisdom of this world foolish?

1:21 This world has not come to acknowledge God by its own wisdom. It is in the wisdom of God. 1:27 God therefore hath chosen the foolish of the world to reproach the wise, and the weak of the world to reproach the mighty, that he might save them that believe,

1:28 For he dared to choose the lowly and despised of the world, those who are nothing, in order that the mighty might become nothing.

1:29 That no man might boast before God.

9 And the angel of the Lord appeared, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were greatly afraid.

They saw a dazzling light that they had never seen before in the night, and they were so afraid in the midst of the event that they were rattled and trembled.

But it is the glory of the Lord, a light to nurture us, comfort us, and forgive us, and we need not fear God's all-seeing, all-pervading light.

John 3:16 God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

3:18 He that believeth on him shall not be judged: but he that believeth not shall be judged. He who does not believe has already been judged. For they will not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

3:19 The judgment is that the light has come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light because of their wickedness.

3:20 For all who do evil hate the light. And they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be brought to light.

3:21 But he who is doing the truth will come to the light. 3:21 But he who is doing the truth will come to the light, that his deeds, which he has done in God, may be made manifest.

2:10 And the angel said, "Fear not, for I am with you. Behold, I tell you of the great joy that will be given to all people.

2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. This is the Christ the Lord.

Fear not, be not dismayed, for unto you is born this day a Savior, who hath taken the condemnation of sin and death. This is Christ the Lord. Great joy for all people and for all people.

2:12 And ye shall see a little child wrapped in cloth, lying in a manger. That is the sign that will be given to you.

2:13 And immediately there appeared a great multitude of the heavenly host, and they were with the angel, and they rebuked God, saying, "This is the sign that is given to you,

2:14 "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to whom he will.

He is the humble One. He who was broken for us and suffered punishment for us. The One who gave His life on the cross outside the city was unique in His birth. This humility was the unchanging sign of Jesus throughout His life. In that sign, in the birth of the Savior, the angels in heaven praised Him uncontrollably. In the highest places, glory be to God, and on earth, peace to whom He will. Let us also sing praises with the heavens.

Isa.

53:1 Who could believe what we have heard? To whom did the arm of the Lord appear?

53:2 He has grown up before the LORD like a young tree, like a root out of dry soil. He has no form for us to behold, no majesty, no beauty for us to admire.

53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men; he was a man of sorrows, and knew sickness. 53:4 And he was despised like one whose face is covered with abominations. 53:4 And we esteemed him not, neither did we respect him: for he was a man of sorrows, and knew sickness.

53:4 For indeed he bore our infirmities, and was our grief, and we thought, "What is this that he is doing? But we thought that he was smitten, that he was smitten of God, that he was afflicted.

53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities. 53:5 But he was chastened himself, and gave us peace; and by his wounds we are healed.

53:6 We have all gone our own way, lost as sheep: but the LORD hath not forgotten the iniquity of us all. 53:7 And the LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all.

53:7 He was tormented and afflicted, but he opened not his mouth. 53:7 He was tormented and afflicted, but he did not open his mouth, like a lamb being led to the hovel, or like a sheep keeping silent before the shearers.

53:8 He was taken away by a tyrannical judgment. 53:9 And who of his generation thought that he was smitten for the transgression of my people, and was cut off from the land of the living?

Philippians 2:4 Consider not yourselves only, but also others.

2:5 And the same mind that ye have in Christ Jesus, let it be in you one toward another.

2:6 For though Christ was in the form of God, do not consider equality with God a thing to be adhered to; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect in the sight of God,

2:7 Instead, He humiliated Himself and took the form of a servant, taking the form of a man.

2:8 And he abased himself, and was not like unto man,

2:8 He humbled Himself, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2:9 Therefore God exalted him, and gave him a name above every name.

2:10 For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth,

2:11 And that every tongue might confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord," and give glory to God the Father.

2:15 And when the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Come, let us go to Bethlehem and see the event of which the Lord has informed us.

2:16 And they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the little ones that were lying in the manger.

2:17 And having seen them, they told the people what had been announced to them concerning this child.

2:18 All the people wondered at what the shepherds had told them.

2:19 But Mary took all these things to heart and pondered them.

The shepherds became the first worshippers of the Lord. They were the first people who were able to see the Lord Jesus. The time was night. A light rose to those who lived in the cold,

harsh, and discouraged, narrowing their shoulders in the midst of the world's headwinds. It was a light of hope, a light of forgiveness, a light of comfort, a light of grace. They gladly looked for the Lord Jesus in the manger, and it did not take much to find His numbered babies that night. Could there be such great disrespect for the Son of Man, so unlike the birth bed of the Lord who created the world? No, God dared to choose that seat. And God wants to be close to our hearts today, He wants a place to stay. Jesus sits in this angry, rude, callous, selfish, unloving heart of mine. No, He likes to sit there.

John 1:9 There was a light of truth to lighten all men, and he came into the world.

1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him. And the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

1:12 But to those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave power to become the sons of God.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Matthew 9:36 And when He saw the multitude as sheep without a shepherd, and as weak and fallen, He had compassion on them.

9:37 And He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

9:38 Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest.

2:20 And the shepherds returned, praising God and rejoicing, because everything they had seen and heard was just as it had been told them.

This is the proof that we can live by the Word.

Everything they saw and heard was as it was spoken to them.

'My words which shall be fulfilled in due time' (Luke 1:20).

'Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you.'

Fear not, Mary, for you have received grace from God."

There is nothing that God cannot do."

How blessed is the woman who believes that what the Lord has spoken will come to pass!

Christmas is a time when we take a step forward in faith, believing from the bottom of our

hearts in a God who is able and perfect to do all things to the best of His ability. Even in the midst of fear, even when it is unthinkable in the eyes of men.

2:20 And the shepherds returned, praising God and rejoicing, because all that they had seen and heard was as it had been spoken to them.

They returned praising God and rejoicing because everything was as it had been told to them. Our lives are also like this. In the promise of the Lord's Word, in the guidance of grace, we are to live joyfully, praising the Lord that His promised blessings have indeed come true.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. Thank you for Christmas and the Nativity of the Lord. Even though we are in God's hands, there are times when we feel fear in us. There are times when we do not understand. But You tell us not to be afraid, but to proclaim great joy. And as it is, You give us great joy. Everything was as You said. We praise Your name. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.